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The King's Stone



41 0 5

Chapter 1 by Roch

Like the gargoyle he once was, his character exuded a sinister chill simply from the chiseled jawline and strong nose – but it was his eyes that begged for attention. Framed by solemn brows, this man's silver irises lacked warmth. They were uninviting and calculating. They seemed to emanate a constant intimidating force, effortlessly warding off those who considered themselves inferior to this man – myself included. His gargoyle semblance was – to such a great extent – mismatched from the man who stands before me. He wasn't grotesque like the crouched brute placed on the pedestal just moments ago, he was young, tall, and lean, and unsettling handsome, and I would've ran as far as I could in the opposite direction – if only he didn't open his mouth.

"God, that nap was heavenly." He smiled. I was motionless; taken aback by the razor-edged, canine-like incisors, and overwhelmed by the threat he could potentially be. Silence sprawled heavily among every inch of the room, while I stood, continuing to stare until he noticed the ill-mannered act. For my benefit, he comically exaggerated the act of sheathing his pointed teeth, and I was surprisingly grateful for his consideration in attempting to lessen my anxiety. Nevertheless, the lack of sound still formed a cloud of awkwardness over the two of us, but aiming to dissipate the unease, I was only met with resistance. My voice was lodged in my throat. I was shocked silent, no vowel, no syllable could escape until I was certain the man before me believed me to be mute.

A few heartbeats later, I was finally able to let out a measly croak, but he began to ignore the wide-eyed girl who awoken him from his slumber and stretch in the middle of their exchange.

Long ago, I had a dream about a man who was a king. He was very kind and gentle, and he always took care of his people. One day, he went on a journey to find a special stone that could help his kingdom grow even more. On his way, he met a group of people who were trying to stop him. They were mean and cruel, but the king was determined to find the stone. After many challenges, he finally found it and brought it back to his kingdom. From that day on, his kingdom flourished and became one of the most powerful in the land. The king lived a long and happy life, and he was remembered as a true hero.

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Baffled at his bluntness, I replied rather boldly for a lady. "Excuse me?"

"Seeing as I'm awake and all, you must have gone through great lengths to wake me up." His statement was not false. After the doctors, herbal workers, and others who claimed they can help him, I was left desperate. The prince was left ashen and ailing on his royal bed while I continued on this hopeless endeavour for a myth. Some would name me a fool, others in love – I was both. Now I was a foolish and young servant in love with her prince continuing on this hopeless endeavour for a myth. "Well. I.. I need something from you."

"Hmmm. Let me guess. A love potion? Those were extremely popular not so long ago. Or maybe you need me for an act of vengeance. I do specialize in the manipulation of fire." Smirking, his eyes glazed over as if he immersed himself in the joyous past. If one were to associate this boy with the infamous mage immensely feared a century ago, I would be dubious in their statements.

"No, I actually need you to find something for me."

As his mind returned to reality, he replied. "Hmmm? Perhaps a lost locket? Or any other lost insignificant object that a lady like you can misplace?"

"I need you to find the King's Stone."

"No." Gone was the lightheaded musings from the boy, replaced was a harsh tone that paralleled this man's appearance. It was staggering to watch the abrupt contrast, and I struggled to stop the fear seeping in as flashes of over-told legends about the destruction of villages were recalled. Flickers of fiery hay and stone among smoke and burnt flesh were aiding in the heightening of my anxiety, but I pressed on.

"I don't understand."

"Exactly. That is why I won't take you there."

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"It's not exactly simple." His voice surprisingly softened; I was certain he could hear the distinct despair as I voiced my request. Apparently, he wasn't as stone cold as his former state. "Only I can open the vault that holds the stone!"

I stood there, weighing the options and consequences. I was desperate and he was relentless, but to what extent is what I wanted to know. My lack of nobility ascertains that I possessed nothing he deemed worthy, but surely the castle can compensate for my behalf. It was the crown prince after all. Watching the soft rise and fall of his bare chest contest with my own heartbeat, I was certain there was only one option.

"Then come with me. Please. I'll give you anything."

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